

# Christians Must Perform the Truth - Part 1

by Stephen Olford

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*Christians must not only possess the truth but also perform it by obeying God's commandments and demonstrating His love in their lives.*

**Duration:** 53:56

**Scripture:** Matthew 22:37-39, John 4:34, John 13:34-35, 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, 1 John 2:7-8, 2 John 1:5

**Topics:** "Truth"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher presents two main propositions. The first proposition is that obedience to truth indicates the authority of God in our lives. The second proposition is that obedience to truth demonstrates the activity of God in our lives. The preacher emphasizes the importance of love for our neighbors and highlights a story of a girl who came to Christ and became a leading officer in the Salvation Army. The sermon also emphasizes the need to love God with all our heart and soul, expressing our love for Him with intensity and emotion. The preacher encourages the congregation to live out their faith by actively helping those in need and by embodying the teachings of the Bible.

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## Transcript

I want you to turn with me to the second epistle of John, the second epistle of John. You remember, yesterday we introduced our subject, Triumphant Living, or if you prefer, Truth Triumphant. And that is actually the title I have given on the little outline that some were asking about after the Bible reading yesterday, and I understand there are copies from the ushers, just the simple little outline, Truth Triumphant.

And our first Bible reading was Christians Must Possess the Truth. Christians Must Possess the Truth. And our key verse there, you remember, was the truth which abides in us and will be in us forever.

That covered verses one through four. Christians Must Possess the Truth. Now we come to our second, Christians Must Perform the Truth.

If we really possess the truth, by the power of the Holy Spirit, that truth now has to be fleshed out. And in fact, if it's not being fleshed out, we really don't possess the truth, because the truth of God has a dynamism in it. It's not just dead truth, it's truth not only verbalized in the Scriptures, but totalized in the Savior.

And if the Savior, by His Spirit, is indwelling us, then that truth must come through. And that, of course, was the perfect picture of our Lord Jesus. We beheld His glory, the manifestation of His outshining, the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, beauty and balance ever in His life.

This morning we're dealing with verses five and six. Let's read them together. There's a little change, perhaps, in your version.

I'm using the New King James here. Now, says the aged apostle, I plead with you, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment to you, but that which you have had from the beginning, that we love one another. This is love, that we walk according to His commandments.

This is the commandment that you've heard from the beginning, that you should walk in it. May the Lord add His blessing to that reading from His holy word. We've come now to what I would term the practical aspect of the subject we introduced yesterday.

It emerges in these two verses. The apostle moves from the possession of the truth to the performance of the truth. It's one thing to receive the commandment from the Father, that's verse four, but quite another matter to walk according to His commandments, that's verse six.

Now, this disparity, this dichotomy between what we believe and how we behave, is the supreme scandal in the Church of Jesus Christ, and a stumbling block in the world in which we live. In the course of His ministry, the Master rebuked this hypocrisy again and again and again. Perhaps His most stinging words were addressed to His own disciples when He asked them, why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say? And He could be standing here this morning as indeed by His Spirit, unseen to natural eyes but real to faith, saying to you and to me, you call me Lord, Lord, in the choruses you sing, your prayers you offer, but why don't you do the things that I say? And we're going to discover this morning that practically all that He said in His teachings, sweeping back into the Old Testament, into the New Testament, all those things are gathered up in the first and second commandments.

Christians must not only possess the truth, they must perform the truth, and that for two main reasons. And so I'm going to give you two main propositions this morning, and you jot them down now, those watching by TV screen, jot them down as you take your notes there, and then let's work them out in terms of exposition, explanation, application, and illustration. The first is this, obedience to truth, which is of course the thrust here, obedience to truth indicates the authority of God in our lives.

Obedience to truth indicates the authority of God in our lives, proposition number one. Proposition number two is this, obedience to truth demonstrates the activity of God in our lives. Obedience to truth demonstrates the activity of God in our lives.

All right, there are our two railway lines, now let's put the steam on. First then, obedience to truth indicates the authority of God in our lives. This is love, that we walk according to his commandments.

Now a commandment has been defined as a rule or standard of life imposed by an authority. And of course God is the authority here, and the rule or standard which he imposes upon us, is nothing less than his good and acceptable and perfect will, revealed and recorded in the scriptures, and applied to you and me by the Holy Spirit. And John tells us that to love God is to desire intensely, intensely to do his good and acceptable and perfect will, for that is the implication.

Now before we exercise intelligent and loving obedience, we must understand what we mean by this authority. Look at the text with me and notice first the source of God's authority, the source of God's authority. Of course the source is in himself, but I want to define that, I want to amplify that.

It says, John, we have received commandment from the Father. Now isn't that interesting? From the Father. Of all the names and titles of God, John employs the designation of a knowing, loving, caring Father.

James the Apostle helps us to understand this even more when he affirms that every good and perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, nor shadow of turning. As the Father of lights, God our Father is the source of physical physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual light. And he does not change.

There is no variation with him. He does not change. As our Father in Christ, he knows what is good, acceptable, and perfect for each one of us.

This is why Paul could state that the commandment is holy, and just, and good. And one all-famous divine puts it, the commandment is holy as requiring perfect conformity to God, just as being founded in the strictest equity, and good as being equally adapted to promote the happiness of the creature, and the glory of the creator. As my heavenly Father, he wants the best for me, the best for me.

And so when he says with authority, keep my commandment, or my commandments, or my words, it's for your good, for my good. I remember many years ago in our church in New York City, preaching on the subject of the cost of discipleship. It was one of those precious times when heaven came down and glory filled our souls.

There was a moving of the Spirit of God. Many people responded. One young woman in particular who came right to the front of the church and sat there and wept.

When it was appropriate, I went and sat alongside of her, and I said, can I help you? She looked up into my face with cheerful eyes, and she said, you know, I want to yield everything to God. I want to yield everything to God. I understand the message, but I'm afraid God will take advantage of me.

You know, I knew what she meant. I appreciated her candor, but she was seriously wrong in her perception of God. She didn't understand that God was her Father.

She was a believer. She didn't understand that God was her Father. So I took her to Romans 12, 1 and 2, the verses I've just quoted.

And I pointed out that when we bring our bodies, a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable unto God as our spiritual mode of worship, a wonderful metamorphosis takes place. God begins from center to circumference and transforms our lives in order that we may experience and demonstrate in everyday life and flesh out in everyday life what is that good and acceptable and perfect will. And then I pointed out it's the good will of God because it's profitable.

In fact, the very word God is almost a contraction of the word good. Everything that God wants for our lives, the best, is wrapped up in that word good. It's profitable.

It's good, and it's acceptable. It's pleasing. It's pleasurable.

It's pleasurable. God isn't a killjoy. He wants us to be essentially happy.

Happy in the deeper sense, not in the worldly sense. I pointed out that it's perfect. It's purposeful.

God's best for our lives is moving on to the greatest purpose of all, all creation, and that is conformity to the likeness of the Lord Jesus and an eternal fellowship in heaven with him. The source of authority is our Father, is our Father. But notice the force of God's authority.

The commandment is this. Walk. Now get up.

Move. Move. Walk.

Don't sit and take notes. Don't wait until you hear the tape back again and say, oh, yes, that brings back memories of Skegness. But get up and walk.

Do something about it. Do something about it. Even though this commandment comes from the Father's heart, it demands total obedience.

We're to walk in it. And failure to do this is a repudiation of divine authority. The Bible says to obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken than the fat of rams.

Have you ever thought that verse through? To obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken than the fat of rams. The most precious part of a sacrifice was the fat, the fat that was placed upon the brazen altar after all the pieces were laid out. But God says, I don't want your sacrifice.

I don't even want your fat of rams. If that's a substitute for obedience. James reminds us in his practical way to him who knows to do good and does not do it.

To him it is sin. Happy is the Christian who can sing with David, I will run in the way of your commandments. And again, I made haste and did not delay to keep your commandments.

You know, you're singing a lot of choruses, a lot of hymns here. Many of them are new to me. But I happen to love poetry and music and hymnology.

It's one of my loved studies. But you can take all the hymn books in this country, America and anywhere else, and you idea of obedience comes in many of the hymns. We can't escape it in one way.

You look under the index list and find out how many hymns have actually been written under the index of the word obedience. That's why to me, one of the most precious hymns in these days in which I'm living is one that we very rarely sing. And when we do, I wonder if we understand what it means.

The little chorus goes, trust and obey. For there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey. One of the leading theologians of our day has said, the greatest sin in the evangelical world today is unapplied orthodoxy.

Now, if you want it in layman's language, listen to the words of my beloved friend, Alan Redpath. He said, it isn't more truth we need, it's 100 percent obedience to the truth we already have. The force of God's authority, walk, walk in the commandment.

The source of God's authority, the father. The force of God's authority as father, he says, get up and walk. I want to make a statement here, and I quote John Stott, from whom I have derived great benefit in the

study of the three epistles, first, second, and third of John.

John Stott says, Christian liberty is not inconsistent with law any more than love is. True, the Christian is not under law in that his salvation does not depend on obedience to the law. Yet this does not relieve him of the obligation to obey the law.

The freedom with which Christ has made us free is not freedom to break the law, but freedom to keep the law. There's a lovely story told in Benjamin Franklin's autobiography of a clergyman who was ordered to read the proclamation drafted by King Charles I that the peoples of the empire should return to Sunday games. To his congregation's horror and amazement, the minister read the royal edict in the church, which many clergy refused to do.

But he followed it with these words, and I quote, remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. And then he added, brethren, I've laid before you the commandment of your king and the commandment of your God. I leave it to you to judge which of the two you ought to observe.

And then proceeded with the service. Obedience indicates the authority of God in our lives. Simple way of putting it, is he Lord? Is he Lord? Is he undisputed Lord? Now quickly to the major part of our Bible reading this morning.

Obedience to truth demonstrates the activity of God in our lives. And that's very simple, a commandment that we love one another. Now, as Bible students, all of you here this week, the whole purpose of expounding scripture is not just looking at one text, but allowing the rest of the Bible to help us to understand what Paul calls comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

So I want to expand this wonderful statement here in the light of the relevant passages, mostly by John himself. Look at verse five, a commandment that we love one another. Notice how John introduces this.

He precedes the statement with the words, I plead with you. I don't know what your version is, but it literally I plead with you. I come alongside of you and identify myself with you in asking you to do what I am doing myself.

The apostle does not issue to others a commandment from which he himself is exempt. Indeed, he identifies himself with the essential activity of God in all our hearts. And that is the outshining of God's love.

God is love. God, loose in me through the spirit. God breaking through my entire personality.

God is love. And as Christians, we're commanded to believe on Christ and to love one another. 1 John 4 7. Why? For God is love.

But once we believe, we cannot but love unless we are retrobrates, phonies, phonies. So as we come to this central message of the passage, love one another, I want us to look at four things and follow me closely. Number one, love.

Love to our father. We stop there. Love to our father.

Love one another means love to God. Jesus asserted the first of all the commandments is here. Oh, Israel, the Lord, our God, the Lord is one.

And you shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, with all your strength. This is the first commandment. Now, the scribes divided the whole law into 613 precepts.

So there was a very deep significance when Jesus said, this is number one. This is priority. This comes first.

He was, of course, quoting the repeated exhortations you find all through the Old Testament to fear the Lord, to walk in his ways and to love him. And it's interesting that Jesus said all the prophets, all the laws, everything that God has said from Genesis to Malachi, in a sense, is all wrapped up in this, all wrapped up in this. And I could give you a whole host of references this morning to jot down, but you can look it up in a concordance.

God not only longs for our love, listen carefully, he legislates it. Let me repeat that. God not only longs for our love, he legislates it.

He says, thou shalt love the Lord, your God. He commands you shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, with all your strength. He claims our love unreservedly and unconditionally.

And I disagree with exegetes or exponents of God's word who say that's just a pile up of words, that's hyperbole, that's just a flow of words. No, no, no. Every one of these words constitutes a part of my personality and God wants me totally.

Let's look at it for a moment. In practical terms, the commandment means loving our Father with a reality of love. Will you notice that? A reality of love.

With all our heart, with all our heart. Now, I know that the word heart in the Hebrew can stand for mind, sometimes emotion, sometimes will, and I could demonstrate that by quoting verses that emphasize the mind here, emphasize the emotions here, and emphasize the will there. But in this context, the heart stands for that which is real.

What I do from my heart is real. With all your heart. He wants more than lip service.

He wants our hearts. His word to us, quote from the Proverbs, my son, give me your heart. My daughter, give me your heart.

My child, give me your heart. The problem in the Old and New Testament times was that so many honored God with their lips, but their hearts were far from him. In fact, Jesus said that to his generation.

You honor me with your lips, but your hearts are far from me. A wonderful giant has just passed away in America. I called him the prophet of righteousness and revival.

And you'll see his books, I'm sure, right here in the bookshop. Dr. Vance Havner. I preached with Dr. Vance Havner more than any other American, I suppose, over the 26 years I've been in the States.

And it wasn't very long ago we were on a platform together and a bunch of Southern Baptists and suddenly he made a statement that actually staggered me. He said, you know, friends, he said, around about 11 o'clock across this country, given time changes, about 11 o'clock across this country, there are more lies spoken by so-called Christians than at any other time in the whole week. And I thought to myself, what does he mean? And then he went on to explain.

We stand to our feet, we say, Jesus, if ever I love thee, my Jesus, tis now. Take my life and let it be consecrated, Lord, to thee. Take my moments and my days, let them flow in ceaseless praise.

And he said, it's a lie, it's a lie. For if all the lips that sounded that message across America were to flesh out in life what they had sung, America would be in Holy Spirit revival. You love God with all your heart, but go further, the commandment means loving God, our Father, with an intensity of love.

Notice it says, with all your soul. What a shame it is that we can express emotion in the sports and the shows of a passing world and yet restrain ourselves when it comes to our love for our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. I love a good soccer game when it doesn't break out into violence.

I love a good rigger game. I can cheer and get excited when Bob Tway chips out the deepest bunker into an eagle and win a match with American Open. But you know what makes me mad? I believe with holy madness.

When I kneel to pray and I move to pray or to sing or to preach and then some crazy idiot says, he's emotional. Quite apart from the fact that God is emotional. My question is, does anybody see you love Jesus? I want to repeat that.

Does anybody sense and feel through the vibes of your life that you love the Lord, Jesus Christ? An intensity of love. The commandment means more than that. Loving God with all our mind.

Loving God our Father with a sagacity of love. The word sagacity means with a penetration of judgment and discernment how balanced the Bible is. I'm to love Him with an intensity, an intensity of love.

Yes, but with a mentality of love, a sagacity of love. I've weighed it up. It's in the word.

It's right and intelligently as a reasonable being. I'm loving God, not only because He tells me, but because it's right. Christian love is more than emotion.

It's devotion. It has a moral content and calls for convictional response. Jesus said, if you love me, keep my commandments.

No, it doesn't. That's a weak translation. If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

The commandments of God are a demonstration of our love. But again, the commandment means loving God our Father with an alacrity of love. Look at that word strength.

With all our strength. You see, love belongs rather to the sphere of action than just emotion. Emotion is right in its proper place.

It is an action love. It is not an involuntary, uncontrolled passion, but unselfish service undertaken by deliberate choice. My father is in heaven.

He served the Lord Jesus for 30 years in Angola, Portuguese West Africa, and I had the deepest love and affection for my wonderful father. Great pioneer, wonderful preacher, writer of hymns, translated the Bible from scratch before Uncle Cam came along and Wycliffe translators and all the rest of it. But as I grew up on the mission field, I came to love my father for two wonderful qualities that were just blended in perfect balance in his life.

The one was his authority and the other was his affection. Everybody in our home knew who was the head of the house. And when father issued a command, there was no alternative to obedience.

There was one ruler, as we used to call it, a ruler. It was black. We called it sin.

And boys, he knew where to lay that. At the same time, he was lovingly affectionate. And even after punishment, I never remember an occasion when I didn't hug him and kiss him.

In the light of this, I have never had a problem in saying and meaning from my heart, I love my father, God, because he tells me to love him. He tells me to love him. All right, let's move fast.

Love to our father. But John has something more in this. It's love to our neighbor.

Love one another means to love our fellow man, irrespective of whether he's friend or foe. For remember, the master said, love your enemies. But you remember, when the Lord Jesus gave the first commandment, he immediately added the second.

And this is the second, he said, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. I believe if I were to just stop on this next point, and we had a time of prayer for the rest of the day, and just this group started to break through all the little villages and hamlets and cities from whence you come, we would see a movement of evangelism such as we haven't seen in our land for a long time. But the trouble is we've never taken this seriously.

We've never taken this seriously. What does it mean to love your neighbor? You remember that occasion when the Lord Jesus talked to a young man who asked, who is my neighbor? Who is my neighbor? And Jesus told the story of the good Samaritan, Luke 10, 25, following. Read it carefully at your In vivid terms, he spelled out love in action to a neighbor in need.

You remember the scene? The traveler in the story is clearly a Jew, though actually no stress is made on that fact. He just called a man. Rank and race don't really matter in this story.

And on his way from Jerusalem to Jericho, a distance of some 17 miles, he is attacked, robbed, and left half-dead. A priest and a Levite pass by with all their ritual and religion and give him no assistance whatsoever. Then arrives a Samaritan who normally would have no dealings with a Jew.

That's why love your neighbor includes even your enemy. Even your enemy. A Samaritan comes by and takes care of him.

Here is love to your neighbor. And the record puts it beautifully. Just look at these three movements.

First, love sees the need. Love sees the need. Love sees no color, no rank, no race.

Love sees the need. He came where he was. He came where he was.

There was no partiality or prejudice here. On the contrary, it was pure love to an unknown neighbor. Not, may I be introduced? An unknown neighbor.

Second, love feels the need. He saw him and had compassion on him. This is more than pity.

William Barclay, to whom I made reference yesterday, describes it as getting into the skin of another. He identified to the nth degree. Love identifies sacrificially and redemptively.

Love sees the need. Love feels the need. Thirdly, love meets the need.

He took care of him. Physically, he bandaged his wounds. Personally, he brought him to an end.

Practically, he paid for his convalescence. When Jesus finished telling that story, he said, Go and do thou likewise. Get up and walk.

Get up. Do it. And I say to you, Go and do likewise.

When Evangeline Booth was a very young woman in frail health, she held a series of meetings in Paris, where Billy Graham is right now. Night after night, she was jeered and mocked, and she almost broke her heart. Somehow, she couldn't get through at all to that audience.

Then she did a very strange thing to many people. She left the platform one night and walked right down the aisle to the back of this hall to a young woman sitting there, painted like a psychedelic dress. Taking the girl's painted face in her hands, Evangeline Booth bent over her and kissed her.

My dear sister, she said compassionately, I would that I could love you to Jesus Christ. The girl's face had not been touched by pure lips like these for a long, long, long time. But the impact of that act broke her.

Broke her. In a few moments, they were at the front of that little hall, kneeling. And in brokenness and repentance and faith, that girl came to Christ and became, listen carefully, became the Salvation Army's leading officer in France.

Who's your neighbor? Who's your neighbor? Truth triumphant breaks through in that kind of love. Quickly move with me to love to our brother, love to our father, love to our neighbor, love to our brother. Yes, love to one another.

Perhaps this is the most emphatic emphasis, apart from love to the Father, that John has in mind. Because remember, he's already written his first epistle. And for those of you who'd like to follow, you might just turn to it, to 1 John 3, 1 John 3, 14 following.

He says, we know that we have passed from death to life because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death. Whosoever hates his brother is a murderer.

And you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. But the apostle doesn't leave it there. He goes on and he says, by this we know love.

Because he laid down his life for us, we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. Whosoever has this world's good and sees his brother in need and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. Now, you know, that is strong language.

And we need to take heed to what the apostle is saying. John is asserting that the lack of love is the evidence of spiritual death. Then on the positive side, he affirms that true love will manifest itself in true sacrifice.

And following this, John describes what this means. Will you notice carefully? If we truly love our brother, I don't care if he's a Baptist, I don't care if he's a Methodist, I don't care if he's a Presbyterian or an Anglican or a Nazarene or a charismatic or a nondescript or whatever. He's my brother.

If Christ dwells in him and if we truly love our brother, listen, we will sacrifice ourselves. We will lay down our lives for the brethren. I wish I had time to explain what that word lays laid down means in the original.

It has a whole sermon behind it. We will lay down our lives for the brethren. And history is replete with examples of men and women who've done this out of love for God and their fellow men.

It bothers me that I can go all around the country here or anywhere else and listen to people in prayer meetings and they'll pray about sick people and they'll pray about their little trivialities. They'll pray about guidance, about the part the church should have for its inner sanctuary. But not a word about Beirut, where the brethren absolutely bathed in blood.

Not a prayer for Angola, where Christians are under the biggest persecution they've ever known in the history of that country and yet experiencing revival. Not a prayer about South Africa, where the western world is as clueless as that horse there, about the situation in South Africa. It's not simplistic.

It's one of the most complicated situations probably in the history of modern world. And believers are crying for a heaven-sent revival to solve it, because no man in Washington and no man in London or woman knows how to solve it. But what is the church doing? What is the church doing? We will sacrifice ourselves.

We will sacrifice our substance. We will share this world's goods. No local church living in the love of Jesus will overlook the members who are in need of this world's goods.

The unemployment in this country is absolutely disastrous. And right in your parish, right in your group, are Christian people who don't even have a square meal. Their shoes are worn out.

Their clothes are shabby. And they're believers. And you go to Spain for your holiday.

We will sacrifice our substance. We will further sacrifice our service. We will love not in word or tongue, but in deed.

Listen, in deed and in truth. There is no joy, there is no joy this side of heaven like that of serving our brethren and sisters in Jesus' name. Even a cup of cold water will not lose its reward.

Stephen Brelais, a fresh-born Quaker who died in New Jersey in 1855, would totally be unknown today except for some immortal words he's left for all posterity. He says this, he says this, I shall pass through this world but once. Any good that I can do, any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it now and not defer it.

For I shall not pass this way again. Heather and I, Heather and I were at a wonderful church in California a little while ago. It's known as the Mount Zion Mystery Baptist Church in Watts, California.

It is pastored by the famous black pastor Dr. E.V. Hill, one of my dearest, dearest friends. I've preached to them all around the country. He was in Amsterdam just recently.

He probably has more influence than any other black man in the evangelical world of America today. He won't allow his congregation to go beyond 1,000 because he wants to be totally in control of everyone. In fact, he conducts a counseling session for 40 minutes every Sunday morning before he preaches, and they all ask questions from the congregation.

You say, what about the thousands who get converted? And they are. He starts smaller churches all the time. He has over 80 of them already, and he calls them the sons of Zion for everyone who pastors one of those churches as one of his own sons, the sons of Zion.

I stepped into the pulpit at half past 10, Sunday morning. I stepped out of the pulpit at half past three. This piddly potatoes type of preaching in this country and elsewhere, you know, 15, 20 minutes, totally unknown in his world.

I preached for an hour, and he said that was too short. Anyway, I never had an experience like it, and Heather's never had an experience like it. We were there for a whole week.

I was there for the whole week, the whole week. I had to learn how to concentrate to preach because whenever I struck a point he hadn't seen before or was fresh to him, he got right up. He's an enormous man.

I mean enormous. I just come up to his belly button, and towering over me, he would look at the congregation. He said, listen to him.

It's in the book. It's in the book. It's in the book.

During the announcements, he said, any need, any need, any need, and a man came right up under the pulpit. There were two microphones on either side. He went to the microphone.

He said, Dr. Hill, he said, we've had a sad event in the life of our church this week. Sister so-and-so has had a fire in her home, and half the church is burnt. Half the home is burnt, and we're very sad.

Our sister is in need. Dr. Hill came to the pulpit. He said, I want six men right now, right now.

I want that house put in absolute ship shape, all furniture replaced, painted, refurbished. This week, will you step forward? Six men came right forward. The job was done.

I was there to see it. The job was done. In fact, she got a better house than she had before.

If we really love our brothers, we do it by giving ourselves, our substance, our service. Lastly, and most personally, our last one, love to our partner, love to our partner. I'm sorry I have to hurry through this, but we'll finish on time.

Love to our partner. Love one another, said John. Love means love to our wives.

You say, what about the other way around? Nope, Paul doesn't teach that. I think I touched a nerve there. Love one another.

While neighbors and brothers include women in general, wives imply partners in particular. This is far more important than we imagine. I don't know about this wonderful country, but in the USA alone, right now, as I speak, one in four wives are battered by their husbands.

The degree of violence there is, but the problem is one of the most serious social evils of our day. In the early church, the woman had even less recognition and respect. It is therefore significant that Paul exhorts husbands to love their wives, and it's a command.

It's legislated. It's part of this exegesis, this exposition. Love your wives.

It's true that the wives are to submit to their husbands, and obviously, if a husband loves his wife, as I'm going to describe in a moment, there is not only the supportive response, there is the submissive response. He's to love his wife with a sacrificial love. Husband, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.

Shut your eyes for a moment and go to Golgotha, and watch your man of Calvary bleed from head and hands and feet and side. He hangs there until there isn't one drop of blood left. And Paul says, love your wife like that.

It is a question whether you want to. You've got to. This loose divorce is unbiblical.

It's unbiblical. God never sees divorce in his mind. I know there are problems.

I've been a pastor for 30 years in New York City, and New York City means that you've been a pastor for 100 years. And I know it's the toughest thing to unscramble scrambled eggs. But God's purpose is love, is commitment for better or for worse forever.

That's Calvary love. That's Calvary love. The husband is to love his wife with a sacramental love.

Something that's sacred, that makes beautiful, because just as Jesus loves the church, washes and cleanses it until his bride is made more and more beautiful to be presented without spot or wrinkle or any such thing in the day of glory, so husbands are so to build the altar of prayer and the ministry of the Word and the power of the Spirit that wife and family become more and more beautiful every day. Love, love, whatever form it takes, social, sexual, or physical, or material, is a sacrament. I love, I love Francis Faulk's remark in the Tyndale commentary.

The husband is to love his wife not just because of the beauty he finds in her, but to make her more beautiful. As the husband ministers by life and by love through the washing of the water of the Word, the family, the whole family, not just the wife, becomes more like Jesus. The husband is to love his wife supernaturally.

He never hates his own body, he loves his body, he nourishes it, but here's a supernatural love that goes beyond his own selfish needs to every conceivable need of his wife with consideration, with courtesy, and with chivalry to every area of her need. Husbands, you won't have any problem for response or support or submission from your wife if you love like that. Cyrus the Mede, the great conqueror of Babylon and then of the known world, had a general under his authority who had a wife who was suspected of treason.

She was tried before the austere tribunal, found guilty, and sentenced to death. After the sentence was pronounced, the woman's husband, the general, made his way to the throne of Cyrus and knelt and pleaded, and his words were King Cyrus, please let me take her place. Cyrus, in awe at what was happening, said to his court, can we terminate a love as great as this? He relaxed the sentence, paroled the woman, gave her back to her husband, and as the couple left the court, the general said to his wife, did you see the benevolent look in Cyrus' eyes when he pardoned you? The wife looked back and said, I didn't see anyone except the man who was prepared to die for me.

Obedience to truth demonstrates the activity of God in our lives. Why? Because obedience to truth accepts and indicates the authority of God in our lives. So in summary, I say to you, perform the truth, the call is clear, obey the word, you've not to fear.

If you would know true blessedness, then walk the path of righteousness. It is the path, it is the path, it is the path the master trod. So emulate the son of God.

Amen. you

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